

Central Falls School District
Board of Trustees
Minutes
6:00 PM

December 9, 2008

I. Call to Order:

Chairwoman, Ms. Ana Cano-Morales called the Central Falls School District Board of Trustees Meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

Present were: Ms. Ana Cano-Morales, Chairwoman
 Ms. Sonia Rodrigues, Vice Chairwoman
 Ms. Mary Lou Perez
 Ms. Ana Cecilia Rosado (6:28 PM)
 Mr. Vladimir Ibarra
 Ms. Leslie Estrada (6:48 PM)

Not Present: Mr. David Cruise

II. Pledge:

Ms. Catherine Fox led the Board in the Pledge of Alliance.

III. Recognition:

Catherine Fox, a Grade 1 English as a Second Language teacher at Veterans Memorial Elementary school was recognized for attaining her National Board Certification.

IV. Policy and Planning:

A. Restraint Policy – first reading

The new restraint policy and existing procedures were discussed. The board recommended some additional language be included in the policy, specifically relating to parent communications. The Board also discussed the content in the procedures and recommended some minor corrections, changes and additions to the document.

Action: Reviewed and revisions suggested.

B. Food Allergies Policy – second reading

The Board noted that the recommended changes from the first reading were made to the policy. There were no questions or further comments.

Action: Motion to approve made by Ms. Mary Lou Perez and seconded by Ms. Sonia Rodriguez. Approved, 4 to 0

C. Presentation – Grant Proposal

Christine Gingerella of SCOPE and Angelo Garcia of Channel One presented the Expansion Grant proposal for Calcutt Too. Under the proposed grant, the extended school day program would serve 240 sixth grade students, Monday through Thursday with one Friday a month being designated for a theme-based field trip.

The program would be aligned with Central Falls High School (CFHS) URI career-based academies, which include ACT (Art, Communications, Teaching), Business and Hospitality, Global Studies, and Science and Health. Students would be introduced to writing, math, reading and science within the four different components in a more exciting hands-on way.

The concept was discussed with the leaders of the high school academies in order to generate some more ideas. The middle school students were also involved in the process to make sure that the structure is something that they would want.

The Board was pleased with the collaborative efforts of the district and the community organizations on the grant and that it was aligned with the high school academies.

D. Discussion – Kids In The Canyon

Mr. Donald Blais requested permission to take Central Falls High School students to the Grand Canyon during the April school vacation as part of the Kids In The Canyon wellness program.

The Board felt that it was a strong leadership program that would be beneficial to the students but wanted to discuss the academic components in more detail. They were also interested in the criteria and selection process.

The students initially sign up for the program and are then given the information about the program and all of the requirements. Permission slips are signed and then training sessions begin. All funds are raised by students, parents, and teachers as well as with the help of local business donations.

The academic components of the program include letter writing, reflective essay, basic geology, basic ecology and the ecosystem that will help the students with there experience in the Canyon. Team building is also incorporated into the program. The curriculum is the Arizona School curriculum that is based around the Grand Canyon.

The Board saw value in the program and praised Mr. Blais efforts but wanted to see a more concrete curriculum around the program that could possibly be imbedded into any one of the high school academies.

Principal Mario Andrade asked the Board if the discussion could be reconvened at a later time so that he could speak with the academy leaders and the PBGR coordinator in order to help Mr. Blais make the proficiencies in the GSEs that are being met clearer.

The Board agreed to discuss it at a later time.

V. Consent Agenda:

Mr. Casey Metcalf, who was in attendance, for his appointed to the district-wide attendance officer position was acknowledged by the Board. No other appointees were present.

Ms. Cano-Morales asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Ms. Rosado noted that the policies that were voted on and approved did not have the board member who motioned and seconded the motion. She asked that it be amended to include that information.

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Ms. Rosado and seconded by Ms. Estrada. The consent agenda was approved, with the requested amendment, by the Board 6-0.

VI. Superintendent's Report:

The Superintendent received the evaluation for the Even Start program, which is run by Ms. Jackie Para. Central Falls Even Start educated 17 students during the program for 2007-2008, and offered 526 hours of adult education. The students attended an average of 327 hours of adult education, which was a 10% increase from the previous year. It is twice as many hours as was issued across the state. The program and the district were very highly commended in the report. As impressive as the gains were the program still did not meet the required 60 hours of Adult Education a month that is the call nationwide, but were impressed with what the program was able to accomplish. Recommendations and commendations were made in each of the six strategies.

Dr. Gallo recognized Ms. Para's work and commitment to the program as well as all those who volunteer who work with her. Most of the work is done in the evenings at Robertson Elementary School.

A United Way information gathering meeting was held with the Board of Trustees. Four Trustees attended. The discussion centered on extended day and all of the supporting opportunities that district might promote. Out of the discussion sprung ideas about supportive policies that the district could develop and adopt. Dr. Gallo asked the board to review the packet that was given at the meeting because it contained sample policies for their review. Dr. Gallo stated that she would have a Central Falls policy proposal for their review at a future meeting soon.

Continuing with the work of the Coalition through Aimee Mitchell of Children's Friend, George Ortiz of Progreso Latino and Angelo Garcia of Channel One as well as the Superintendent will come together to work on the policy as a district to develop and adopt the Rhode Island Standard for extended day work so that everything ties together and is fully aligned.

TALL University is growing roots in the community with eight programs across the district. Professional Development (PD) has also begun with teachers. A team from Calcutt Middle School attended a morning PD run by Elizabeth Keiser of TALL University. The team asked to stay longer and arrangements were made so that they could continue the PD for the rest of the day. Dr. Gallo referred the Board members to a report that was in their packets about Ms. Keiser and her work in Brazil. Dr. Gallo recognized that Ms. Keiser's work was important to the district and to all students, especially English Language Learners. She helps them develop vocabulary and teaches students how to feel comfortable within the school environment. Ms. Keiser is helping to bridge the gap between teachers and students.

Dr. Gallo noted that the exercise on the second page of the report was done with Central Falls students and then those students led a similar activity with the ESL Director Pat Morris and with monitors from across the state as well as with some of the district personal. It was a true testament of what TALL University is all about. Though TALL has been in the district for a number of years it has presently taken a strong hold in the community. With continued grant support, many more expectations will be realized.

VII. Public Comment:

No public comment.

VIII. Next Board Meeting:

Next Board meeting will be held on January 13, 2009

IX. School Board Comment/Communication:

Ms. Cano-Morales reported that the Rhode Island Foundation (RIF) made the commitment to continue to support TALL University as well as the high school academies. RIF announced the second year grant in the amount of \$312,000. The previous year RIF invested \$175,000. In the summer there was also a \$50,000 planning grant that was given.

Ms. Cano-Morales also thanked Dr. Gallo for the gift she made to Caribbean and Latin American schools in the name of the Trustees and the district. She appreciated that the gift was for a country that could potentially be associated to any of the students within the district.

Ms. Cano-Morales acknowledged that the high school parent/teacher conference from the previous month had an immense turnout.

Ms. Cano-Morales informed everyone about the Commissioner's Face-to-Face meeting. She acknowledged that it was her first time participating in a formal face-to-face as a Board Chair and it was the first time that people who were not in administration were in attendance to give the status of the district. Ms. Morales acknowledged Veteran Elementary School Principal Ann Lynch; Captain Hunt Elementary School Principal, Edda Carmadello; Central Falls High School Principal, Dr. Mario Andrade; Central Falls High School Assistant Principal, Mike Lauro; Central Falls High School Assistant Principal, Andrew Ben; Calcutt Middle School Principal, Elizabeth Legault; Academy Leaders, Bob Scappini and Josh LaPlante.

Ms. Cano-Morales thanked the other Board of Trustees for their time and commitment to the district.

Ms. Perez extended her congratulations to the Girls' Volleyball team for advancing to and winning the Division III finals.

Ms. Estrada informed the Board that an athletic meeting was held for the parents to explain what is expected of the students as well as the parents. She stated that they had about 200 people in attendance. She congratulated and thanked Dr. Andrade and the coaches for their dedication. She also acknowledged Mr. LaPlante and the academies.

X. Executive Session and Adjournment of public session:

Ms. Cano-Morales asked for a motion to adjournS the meeting and go into Executive Session. Ms. Rosado motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Rodriguez seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM and moved to Executive Session.